



U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
District of Kansas

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CORRECTED RELEASE**GRAND JURY RETURNS INDICTMENTS - TWO CHARGED WITH BANK ROBBERY**

Topeka, Kan. – United States Attorney Eric Melgren announced that six individuals were indicted on Thursday, July 17, 2003, by a federal grand jury in Topeka, Kansas. Those indicted include:

- ! **Laverna J. Johnson**, 34, Tulsa, Oklahoma, currently in custody, is charged with one count of robbing the Heritage Bank, 3024 S.W. Wanamaker Road, Topeka, Kansas, of an undisclosed amount of cash on July 11, 2003, and one count of carrying a handgun during the bank robbery.

If convicted, Johnson faces a maximum of twenty-five years in federal prison, without parole, for bank robbery and a minimum of seven years for carrying a gun during the bank robbery. The case was investigated by the Topeka Police Department and the FBI.

- ! **Nancy A. Pierce**, 47, Wichita, Kansas, currently in custody, is charged with one count of robbing the Fidelity Bank, 3101 S. Seneca, Wichita, Kansas, on July 15, 2003, of an undisclosed amount of cash.

If convicted, Pierce faces a maximum of twenty years in federal prison without parole. The case was investigated by the Wichita Police Department and the FBI.

- ! **Jose A. Lopez, Jr., 25, Rosa Marie Lopez, 19, and Julio Sesar Dominguez, 21**, all from Phoenix, Arizona, are each charged with one count of conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute 500 grams or more (1.1 pounds or more) of methamphetamine from January 17, 2003, through January 19, 2003; one count of possession with the intent to distribute 500 grams or more (1.1 pounds or more) of methamphetamine on January 19, 2003; one count of conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute 500 grams or more (1.1 pounds or more) of cocaine from January 17, 2003, through January 19, 2003; and one count of

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possession with the intent to distribute 500 grams or more (1.1 pounds or more) of cocaine on January 19, 2003, all in Lyon County, Kansas.

If convicted, each face a minimum of ten years and a maximum of life in federal prison, without parole, on the methamphetamine charges and a minimum of five years and a maximum of forty years on the cocaine charges. Each are currently in custody and are scheduled to make their initial appearance in U.S. District Court in Topeka, Kansas, on July 29, 2003. The case was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Kansas Highway Patrol and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Greg Hough.

! Wendell M. Smith, 33, Topeka, Kansas, is charged with one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm on June 20, 2003, in Shawnee County, Kansas.

If convicted, Smith faces a maximum of fifteen years in federal prison without parole. The case was investigated by the Topeka Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

As in any criminal case, a person is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. The Indictments filed merely contain allegations of criminal conduct.